DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 598 CS 215 610

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TITLE Accommodating Difference: Native American English Education--Reexamining Past Assumptions and Recognizing Socio-Political Influences.
PUB DATE Mar 96
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (47th, Milwaukee, WI, March 27-30, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Historical Materials (060) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acculturation; *American Indian Education; American Indians; Boarding Schools; *Culture Conflict; *Educational History; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; English (Second Language); *English Instruction; *Ethnic Discrimination; Indigenous Populations; Racial Attitudes; Rhetorical Theory; Standard Spoken Usage
IDENTIFIERS Carlisle Indian School SD; Culturally Different Students; Genocide; *Native Americans

ABSTRACT

J.D.C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1885-88, asserted, "No unity or community of feeling can be established among different peoples unless they are brought to speak the same language, and thus become imbued with like ideas of duty." Educators at government-operated Native American boarding schools embraced this assumption and heralded English as the key to assimilating Indian children into an Anglo society. Therefore, language became the lens used to modify the student's vision, and rhetorical theory influenced which lens was prescribed. A need for nationwide conformance to Standard American English practices was implied with the claim that this would insure access by all to the stereotypical "American Dream." Educators in the 1880s seem to have been influenced by the work of rhetoricians George Campbell and Hugh Blair. Blair emphasized memorizing and translating in the practice of speaking and writing English. The Carlisle Indian School's General Richard Henry Pratt's views of Native American education were tinted by his own limited experiences; he required students to participate in classroom regimentations where they repeated English phrases and copied English words from examples provided. Pratt attempted to force his perspectives onto a divided and oppressed people--his vision contributed to the blinding confusion inherent amidst cultural genocide and destitute poverty. Approaches to pedagogy--the way usage and style are undertaken, or not--are often determined by socio-politically or culturally charged assumptions which generally proceed unexamined. (A chronology and 7 references are appended.) (CR)

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CCCC Roundtable
Session L.16
Crossing the Boundaries of Time: Writing, Race and Gender
Presenter 2: Debbie Oesch, Warner Southern College
Title: "Accommodating Difference: Native American English Education--Reexamining Past Assumptions and Recognizing Socio-Political Influences"

Long time ago, when mountains were the size of salmon eggs, Coyote was going along, and saw that Rabbit was doing something. Now, this Rabbit was a *Twati*, an Indian doctor, and as Coyote watched, Rabbit sang his spirit song, and the Rabbit's eyes flew out of his head and perched on a tree branch. Rabbit called out, "Whee-num, come here," and his eyes returned to their empty sockets.

This greatly impressed Coyote, who immediately begged Rabbit to teach him how to do this.

Rabbit said no.

Coyote begged.

Rabbit said no.

"Oh, please," cried Coyote.

"No," replied Rabbit.

"But I'll do exactly as you say!"

"I will teach you," said Rabbit, "but you must never do this more than four times in one day, or something terrible will happen to you." And so Rabbit taught Coyote his spirit song, and soon Coyote's eyes flew up and perched on a tree.

"Whee-num! Come here!" called Coyote, and his eyes returned to him.

Now Rabbit left, and Coyote kept practicing. He sent his eyes back and forth to the tree four times. Then he thought, "I should show off this new trick to the Human People, instead of just doing it for myself."

So Coyote went to the nearest Indian village, and yelled out for all the people to gather around him. With his new audience, Coyote sang the Rabbit's [spirit] song, and the crowd was very impressed to see his eyes fly out of his head and perch on the branch of a tree.

"Whee-num!" Coyote called out. His eyes just sat on the tree and looked down at him. The Indian people started to laugh.

"Come here!" shouted Coyote. His eyes just looked at him.

"Whee-num!"

Just then a crow flew by, and spotting the eyes, thought they were berries. The crow swooped down and ate them.

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> Now Coyote was blind--[He] staggered out of the village, hoping to find new eyes. . . . Coyote felt around and discovered huckleberries, so he took those and used them for his eyes. But huckleberries are so dark, everything looked black. Now Coyote was really feeling sorry for himself.
>
> "Why are you so sad?" asked a small voice, for a little mouse had heard him.
>
> "My dear Cousin," said Coyote, "I've lost my eyes . . . I'm blind, and I don't know what to do." . . .
>
> "You poor thing," [replied mouse,] "I have two eyes, so I will share one with you." Having said this, Mouse removed one of his eyes and handed it to Coyote. Now Coyotes are much larger than mice, and when Coyote dropped Mouse's eye into his socket, it just rolled around in the big empty space. The new eye was so small it only let in a tiny amount of light. It was like looking at the world through a little hole.
>
> Coyote walked on, still feeling sorry for himself, just barely able to get around with Mouse's eye. . . "I'm just pitiful," he sobbed.
>
> "Why are you crying, Coyote?" asked Buffalo in his deep voice.
>
> "Oh, Cousin," began Coyote, "all I have to see with is this tiny eye of Mouse. It's so small it only lets in a little bit of light, so I can barely see."
>
> . . . "You poor thing," [replied buffalo], "I have two eyes, so I will share one with you." Then Buffalo took out one of his eyes and handed it to Coyote. Now buffaloes are much larger than Coyotes, and when Coyote tried to squeeze Buffalo's eye into his other socket, it hung over into the rest of his face. So large was the buffalo's eye that it let in so much light, Coyote was nearly blinded by the glare . . . Everything looked twice as large as it ordinarily did. And so, Coyote was forced to continue his journey, staggering about with mismatched eyes. (Tafoya 29,30)

You may be questioning the value of such an unusual tale, as I did the first time I encountered Terry Tafoya's striking use of lore to introduce an article on Native American learning styles. But what better place than a roundtable on "crossing the boundaries" to challenge what Tafoya calls the "reductionary tendencies" of the "Standard Average European" paradigm (31).

While my logical methodology would include making direct correlations between say Coyotes and disillusioned students, I will attempt to take advantage of this opportunity to resist my Standard Average European (or SAE) reductionary tendencies and heed the comment of Larry Bird, the Keres Indian (not the NBA star), "You watch, listen and wait and the answer will come to you. It's yours then, not like learning in school" (Tafoya 30).

Native American use of stories served, and still serves, multiple purposes--the most prevalent of which is to lead the student to that indescribable moment when information

and insight calash, and the proverbial "light bulb" is illumined. Tafoya argues that "ahhh" moments are stolen when explanations are given rather than discovered (30-31). This approach to self-made discoveries may share commonalities with Peter Elbow's "Doubting and Believing Game" or be associated with what Sondra Perl recognized as the "felt sense"--a phenomena "[that] can be used as a tool . . . encompass[ing] everything you feel and know about a given subject at a given time" (Perl 115).

Tapping into these tools, I have considered the dramatic changes evidenced throughout the 1800's regarding SAE approaches to Native American English education.

I have struggled to utilize caution as I mapped Nineteenth-Century rhetorical theories onto government educational policy and a particular cite of learning. It would be the epitome of stereotypical SAE tendencies to reduce rhetorical movements to a linear profile of textbooks or theorists. James Berlin warns of this desire to oversimplify our rich history noting that, "No rhetoric . . . is permanent, [nor is it] embraced by all people, or even some one person or group, at all times" (1). Thus, recognizing the "nature of the beast," I have worn variety of lenses while glancing back at some of the implied affects of Nineteenth-Century rhetorical theories and elitist assumptions on one Native American school--the Carlisle Indian School--open from 1879 to 1918.

J. D. C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1885-88, asserted, "No unity or community of feeling can be established among different peoples unless they are brought to speak the same language, and thus become imbued with like ideas of duty" (Atkins xxi-xxiii). Educators at Carlisle, as at many other government operated Native American boarding schools, embraced this assumption and heralded English as the key to assimilating Indian children into an Anglo society. Therefore, language became the lens used to modify student's vision, and rhetorical theory influenced which lens (or lenses) were prescribed. Scottish Common Sense Realism was one of the primary

rhetorics influencing pre-Civil War pedagogy and, later, the founding of the Carlisle school.

Common Sense Realism located reality in two discrete realms---the spiritual and the material making "truth extralingual, existing apart from the arbitrary signs used to express it" (Berlin *Writing* 7). It was consciously opposed to Aristotelian philosophy, replacing deduction and syllogistic reasoning with a Newtonian world view founded on induction (Berlin *Writing* 7, 19; Berlin *Contemporary* 51). This new rhetoric was compatible with the scientific and industrial advances of the mid-nineteenth century. It also complemented the increasing value placed on individual success (the self-made man) and was positivistic in nature.

Because of its compatibility with the lassie-fare emphasis of a growing industrial economy, Common Sense Realism was widely accepted in American colleges and universities and had a notable influence on many who were educated under this "new logic" (Berlin *Contemporary* 51.) Educators and Legislators active in the 1880's seem to have been influenced exposed to the work of George Campbell and Hugh Blair.

Campbell was consciously opposed to Scholasticism focusing instead "on a 'knowledge of things' gained by examining nature" (Berlin *Writing* 20). He claimed that Rhetoric's primary concern was "with shaping the message discovered outside the composing process so that it had the desired effect on the audience" (21). This "message" could be learned through sensation, memory and imagination, but could only be reproduced through concrete language (23). Campbell's concern then moved from conveyance to proper usage, which he realized was a matter of social custom. He considered usage "under three heads: reputable use, national use, and present use" (23). His limited cataloguing of usage appears to have provided the venue through which he determined the forms of discourse considered reputable, or appropriate--obviously deeming other uses as inappropriate. Campbell's heuristic went on step further implying a need for nationwide conformance to Standard American English

practices. He claimed that unified conformance would eradicate communication barriers across social and racial enclaves, insuring access by all to the stereotypical "American dream." Government figures apparently embraced Campbell's view. Officials coaxed Native American families to enroll their children in schools like Carlisle where they were promised "new, better vision" through education and economic liberation--which would result in assimilation.

Educators also assumed that the most logical approaches to instruction would naturally be those to which they themselves responded. Hugh Blair provided practical suggestion for traditional SAE classroom pedagogy and laid the groundwork for language instruction introduced at Carlisle. Blair emphasized memorizing and translating in the practice of speaking and writing English because "mental discipline" could be strengthened like muscles through exercise (Berlin *Writing* 31). Consequently, he saw the educators mission as two fold--to discipline the student through drills and exercises; and to give general principles to which the student must strictly adhere (Berlin *Writing* 31).

The founder of the Carlisle school, General Richard Henry Pratt, utilized these techniques requiring students to participate in a variety of classroom regimentations where they repeated English phrases and copied English words from examples provided. He even hosted a Saturday evening assembly where students retorted to his prompts with chants learned in the classroom.

Pratt: What is the solution to the Indian problem?

Assembly: Abolish the reservation system!

Pratt's "meetings [were] designed to develop facility in English" (Gilcrest 53). And while his view of Native American education was tinted by his own limited experiences, he attempted to force his perspectives onto a divided and oppressed people--his vision contributed to the blinding confusion inherent amidst cultural genocide and destitute poverty.

A third assumption, which surfaced as Pratt's more philanthropic approach to education fell from political favor, implied that Native Americans were ineducable and should thus be channeled into labor intensive jobs. Thereby faced with the Jeffersonian demand for excellence and the Jacksonian demand for numbers, Carlisle began to focus its educational endeavors on serving the needs of business and industry (Berlin *Writing* 60; Hoxie 204).

Amidst an emergent Scientistic view of instruction, Current-Traditional theorists flourished. During the late "nineteenth century, [Hill, Wendell and Genung] established a paradigm for teaching writing that has survived to the present." Riding on the coattails of Campbell and Blair, these theorists "took the most mechanical features" inherent in Scottish Common Sense Realism, and "made them the primary concern of writing teachers" (Berlin *Writing* 62). " This came to be regarded as the manifestation of the assembly line in education" (62). This reductionist view severely limited educational opportunities once available at Carlisle. By the time it was closed in 1918, the Carlisle Indian School had evolved into a trade school specifically chartered to "prepare students for the mechanical trades and apprentice them to Ford Motor Company" (Hoxie 204).

Carlisle's evolution from a nationally recognized educational institution, to a trade school specializing in auto mechanics is obviously not a direct reflection upon movements in Rhetorical theory. Conversely, approaches to pedagogy--the way usage and style are undertaken, or not undertaken as is sometimes the case--is often determined by socio-politically or culturally charged assumptions which generally proceed unexamined. I will attempt to reflexively consider assumptions and be willing to look through another's eyes to gain insight into varying cultural tropes and the outside influences affecting these paradigms.

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Nineteenth Century

Socio-Political Factors Influencing the Carlisle Indian School

Carlisle Indian School

1879- Carlisle founded by General Richard H. Pratt with 136 students from four tribes (84 Sioux from the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations) *Pratt's Theme: Kill the Indian in Him & Save the Man*

Outing System Instituted-- *immerse NA in Anglo culture and hold "them there until they are thoroughly soaked"* (Pratt 335).

1890- Over 1,000 students attended Carlisle-- *"The progress of the pupils . . . is far greater than in day schools. The children being removed from the idle and corrupting habits of savage homes are more easily led to adopt the customs of civilized life and inspired with a desire to learn"*--Board of Indian Commissioners (Reyhner 46).

By 1901- Educators at Carlisle "no longer worked to transform the children who arrived there" and began concentrating efforts on English literacy instruction and the training of factory workers and farmers (Hoxie 194, Fritz 164-166).

1894- Commissioner Hailmann developed new curriculum to "replace schoolroom pedantry" with "really vital work" (Hoxie 190)

Pratt's Resignation due to disagreements with legislators regarding interdisciplinary education of students vs. the move to exclusively technical instruction

Carlisle specialized in mechanical trades and apprenticed students to the Ford Motor Company (Hoxie 204).

1918- Carlisle closed/ used as an Army rehabilitation cite for veterans of WW 1

Governmental Legislation

1849- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) transferred from War Dept. to the Dept. of Interior

1870- $100,000 budgeted for Native American (NA) Industrial Schools
1871- Treaty making period ends

1880- Mandate: All instruction of NA students at government funded schools must be in English

"As a savage we cannot tolerate him (Native American) any more than a half-civilized parasite, wanderer, or vagabond. The only alternative left is to fit him by education for civilized life" --1880 Board of Indian Commissioners (Reyhner)

1890- Federal tuition offered to public schools educating NA students

1891- T. J. Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs (CIA), initiated public school integration attempts--failed

1892- Compulsory attendance of NA schools approved & enforced/ Federally funded teachers placed in the Civil Service

1894- Prohibited sending NA students out-of-state without parental consent/ Outlawed the withholding of rations to gain consent/ by 1895- NA students could no longer be transferrer from school to school without parental or student consent

1916- Uniform course of study introduced at all federally funded NA schools

Rhetorical Theory

Please note that the Rhetorical theories and theorists are presented in order as presented in James Berlin's Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges.' These are not intended to imply dates or even a specific time continuum since " A Rhetoric is a social invention . . . establishing for a period the conditions that make a peculiar kind of communication possible . . . No rhetoric . . . is permanent, is embraced by all people, or even by some one person or group, at all times" (1).

Scottish Common Sense Realism: Attempted to take into account all aspects of human behavior--the sensory and rational, the ethical, and the aesthetic/ addressed the "total person," yet the above stated faculties were mechanically conceived; they function independently of each other (62)

Romantic Rhetoric: Democratic rhetoric persuasively presents truth (50)/ the rhetor offers the wholeness of the dialectical product of idea and experience through concrete use of metaphor (51)/ Emerson's rhetoric is everywhere dialectical (53)

Current-Traditional: Accepted the mechanistic faculty psychology, but removed ethical and all but the most elementary emotional consideration from the concern of rhetoric/ Rhetoric's sole appeal is to understand and reason/ highest manifestation found in exposition and argument/ writer's duty is to rid self of the trappings of culture that distort perceptions--an objective, detached observer (63)

New Romanticism/ An alternative view: Rhetoric, in theory and practice, must be based on a holistic response, involving the total person, the ethical and aesthetic as well as the rational (51)

Theorists

George Campbell
Hugh Blair
Richard Whately

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Adams Sherman Hill- Harvard
Barrett Wendell- Harvard
John Franklin Genung- Amherst

Fred Newton Scott- *Emersonian, operating within the philosophical structure of American Pragmatism* (77)
Joseph Villers Denney
Gertrude Buck

Other Influences

Theory of "Social Evolution" --Anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan asserted: "Social development occurs in three stages--savagery, barbarism, and civilization--and all people can be placed in one of these levels." This theory further intimated that societies not advancing would move toward extinction, validating the reference to Native Americans (NAs) as "Vanishing Americans."

Henry Teller, Secretary of Interior 1882-85, promoted belief in the equity of "mankind" yet, paradoxically, noted that NAs should be "compelled to enter our civilization whether he will or...wills it not" (Hoxie 52).

J. D. C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1885-88, asserted "the main purpose of educating them (Native Americans) was to enable them to read, write, and speak the English language."

Reform sympathizer William Strong advised that NA "should not maintain their own language."

Educator/Administrator Alfred L. Riggs notified Secretary Schurz, "First teaching the children to read and write in their own language enables them to master English with more ease."

Calvin Woodward : His theory of manual education advocated "symmetrical training" exposing students to "habits of work and concentration that could be transferred to academic areas" (Hoxie 68).

By 1901- Instruction of NA students in literature and the arts seen as "seed sown on stony ground" (Leupp 194).

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